

of the Southern States provision for the establishment of free public schools. It was due in no insignificant measure to the energies and labors of the first Agent of the Peabody Fund, that at the time of his death in 1880, all of the eleven States of the South which had constituted the Confederacy, and were the first and chief beneficiaries of Mr. Peabody's endowment, had established public-school systems at least on paper, and were moving onward to their larger development in response to the educational evolution of a new economic and social condition.

"In each of them," writes Dr. A. D. Mayo, in the Education Report for 1903, "model schools had been established by the encouragement of Dr. Sears; teachers' institutes had been subsidized; the Peabody Normal College had been founded, in connection with what remained of Dr. Lindsley's University of Nashville; and in all practical ways the aid of the Fund, with that of the United States Bureau of Education, had been extended to the authorities of the new State and municipal systems. The greatest step of all was the including of the more than 1,000,000 colored children and youth in the new arrangement in all the ex-Confederate States."

Yet, if the work of the former General Agent was important and far-reaching, that which lay before his successor was scarcely less so. Measuring literacy by percentages demonstrated its woeful lack in many of these Southern States. These percentages, taken among whites and negroes together, demonstrate that, as late as ten years after the death of Dr. Sears, the averages ran, counting persons ten years old and upwards, from 14.4 in the State in which there were fewest negroes to 45 in two of those in which the blacks were most numerous. The

Southern section of the Union was impoverished in many directions almost to penury, by war, and by the reconstruction pillage which followed it; and perhaps nowhere was this more keenly felt than in those States whose percentage of illiteracy was highest. The growth of public sentiment in favor of universal education remained to be further developed and cultivated among a people, who had hitherto believed that the new educational system apparently operated to confer the largest direct benefit upon those who bore the least part of its heavy burden of expense.

Perhaps no one could have appreciated more keenly than did Curry, with his wide experience and profound knowledge of conditions, the magnitude of the task which he had undertaken, and the difficulties and uncertainties that stared him in the face at every onward step. In discussing what Sears had accomplished before him, Curry writes:—

It would be a hasty judgment to conclude that the work was finished during the period of his agency, or that free schools had been established beyond the possibility of destruction. There were many considerations which would have made it foolish to relax vigorous efforts for keeping alive and strengthening the favoring educational sentiment, and making irrevocable what had been put upon the statute books. . . . Some excellent men had deep-seated convictions, arising from political, social, or religious reasons, adverse to gratuitous State education. The experiment of free schools was not, in all localities, so successful as to clear away doubts, and prejudices, and reverse those traditional habits of thought and action which the experience of all peoples has shown it to be difficult for the mind to free itself from. Time was also needed to pass from private to public schools, to quiet or overcome the

selfish oppositions of those who engaged in private teaching, and to transfer education to the control of cities and States. Prejudice, interest of teachers, sparseness of population, impatience of taxation, financial depression, were serious hindrances. School-houses had to be built and furnished, teachers to be trained, schools to be graded, friction to be overcome, and an unfamiliar system to be accommodated to environments. The whole work of introducing a new system and improved methods of teaching was beset with many difficulties, one of the chiefest of which was insufficiency of means to pay competent teachers and continue the schools in session for longer periods. (History of the Peabody Fund, pp. 79, 80.)

While Curry, in his administration of the trust committed to his charge, did not hesitate to enter into its smaller details, as occasion demanded, or opportunity afforded, he nevertheless made it his habit to work largely through the already established agencies that had shown themselves of approved efficiency. He spent much of his time in conference with teachers, pastors, school superintendents, and college presidents; he addressed, with renewed interest and enthusiasm, the familiar educational and religious assemblies, with which his recent life had brought him into such frequent and continued contact; he visited schools and colleges, and met and mingled with their students and faculties; he made himself acquainted by private contact and in public speeches with State executive officials and legislative statute-makers; he drew near to the fountain-heads of social and political effectiveness; and directed their flow in streams of irrigating beneficence.

Even before his first annual report was presented to the Peabody Board, in October, 1881, he had al-



ready addressed the legislatures of Texas, Tennessee and Georgia upon the subject of Education in its varied relations, including those in which it stood to the Peabody Trust. His address to the Tennessee legislature, on normal instruction and the Peabody Normal College at Nashville, was made on March 18, 1881; and on the preceding day he had made his first visit to the College in his new capacity of General Agent, to find the names of Peabody, Sears and Curry illuminating the walls of the chapel, and to meet with an appreciative and enthusiastic greeting on the part of those to whom he spoke.

Of the Normal School at Nashville, which, at this time of Curry's visit, had already been in existence for more than five years, Dr. Mayo has written an account in the "Education Report" for 1883.

"In due time the Peabody Fund, under the expert guidance of Dr. Sears, was brought to the parting of the ways encountered by every public school system everywhere. Even before the death of Dr. Sears, which occurred at Saratoga, New York, July 6, 1880, it was realized that the moderate income from \$2,000,000, rarely exceeding \$100,000, must be concentrated largely on the training of teachers. In 1875 arrangements were made with the corporation of the University of Nashville, Tenn., for the absorption of its academical features and the use of its buildings in an institution named the Peabody Normal College. With no help from the State, the school was opened on December 1, 1875, in one room, with thirteen female pupils, under the Presidency of Dr. Eben S. Stearns of Massachusetts. The trustees established scholarships for the benefit of all the ex-Confederate States and West Virginia worth \$200 a year for two successive years, the number limited to the delegation in Congress of each State. The result was that during the twenty-one years,



1876-1897, twelve States received \$383,584.10 in Peabody scholarships. A crisis in the finances of the College raised the question of its removal to Georgia in 1880; but in the spring of 1881 the city of Nashville and the State of Tennessee came to the rescue." (p. 536.)

The annual appropriation for the College, made by the legislature of Tennessee in 1881, was \$10,000; but it was coupled with such conditions that only one-half of that amount was actually realized. In 1883 the State, acceding to a proposition of the Peabody Trustees, made the \$10,000 an annual appropriation, unqualified by other conditions or encumbrances; and in 1891 the amount was increased to \$15,000 per annum. Dr. Stearns, the first President of the College, died in 1887, and was succeeded in the Presidency by Dr. William H. Payne, who had been Professor of the Art and Science of Teaching in the University of Michigan. Dr. Payne's election and acceptance of the office were brought about by the influences of Curry, who was at that time at home in America, on a leave of absence from his post as United States Minister to Madrid. Dr. Payne held the office until 1901, when he resigned; and in his place the Hon. James D. Porter, a former governor of Tennessee, and a staunch and well-known friend of the College, was elected.

It may be remarked in passing that while the policy of establishing and encouraging normal schools had the favor of the Peabody Board from the beginning, this policy was carefully and conservatively exercised, until the several States had all been committed thoroughly to the more elementary principle of organizing public free schools, and establishing them upon a permanent basis and progressive system.

On Wednesday, October 5, 1881, the Peabody Board of Trustees assembled in annual meeting at the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York City. It was their twentieth assembling; and there were present Mr. Winthrop, the chairman, and Messrs. Fish, Aiken, Evarts, Wetmore, Stuart, Barnes, Whipple, Jackson, Hayes, Manning and Lyman. Curry submitted to the Board his first annual report, which in the printed records of the Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund occupies thirty-one octavo pages.

Appropriately and generously, the General Agent began his report with a tribute to his predecessor, and a review of the work that he had accomplished.

"To succeed one so competent," he writes, "was an embarrassment and a stimulus, exciting fears and giving encouragement. To walk in his footsteps was an impossibility; to profit by his almost unerring wisdom and sagacity has been my daily experience. No one can study the work of Dr. Sears, as I have had occasion to do, without being filled with wonder and admiration at his adaptedness to the difficult and delicate duties he had to discharge. . . . The best eulogy of Dr. Sears is that he met all the requirements."

The Proceedings of the Peabody Education Fund have been published in a series of volumes; and Curry has left behind him a "History of the Peabody Fund," in which his association with the Trust is dealt with at length. It would therefore be a work of supererogation to dwell at length in these pages upon what has been more fully and better presented elsewhere. But in order to keep before the mind of the reader Curry's figure and life and mental attitude towards what had come to engage his best energies and most eager efforts, some passages from this first

report of his may be appropriately quoted here. After further comment upon the character of Dr. Sears and upon the value of his services, Curry proceeds to point out the need of a constant and continued vigilance on the part of the Board, that no step gained might be lost, and that other and pressing demands might be properly met. With a yet unassured confidence in the ultimate establishment of a fixed public opinion in behalf of general education, and with a large experience in dealing with legislative bodies, he felt it uncertain to rely alone upon the statute-books for the systems of public instruction, and unsafe to relax any vigilance or omit any use of energetic effort. "*Nulla vestigia retrorsum;*" "*Vigilantibus, non dormientibus,*" seemed to be the charts by which he sought to direct his sails over a yet tempestuous and uncertain sea.

"Free schools," he declares, "have a ceaseless enemy in the illiteracy of the masses. Ignorance does not feel its needs. Enlightenment must come from without. The uneducated do not appreciate the import and value of education. When to fearful illiteracy there are superadded changed social conditions, remodelling of laws and constitutions, and general pecuniary prostration at the South, there will be apparent and imperative need for money that State and local taxes and ecclesiastical and private benefactions cannot supply."

These statements were truisms, so potent in themselves, and so well known to the Trustees, as to seem to require no reiteration. And yet it was as absolutely a necessity for Curry himself, and for the members of the Board, to carry them constantly in their view, as it is for the mariner to watch the veering of his compass' needle in sailing his charted ways.



"Since my appointment," he continues, "I have visited all the States included in our work, except Florida and West Virginia, and by special request have made addresses before the legislatures of Texas, Tennessee and Georgia. These visits have given me an insight into the workings of school systems, and a personal acquaintance with school and other public officers, which must be of much value. As your comprehensive plans are carried on under State auspices, mere office work will not enable me to accomplish them. Besides the need of awakening and keeping alive the public mind on the general subject of free education, there must be conferences with law-makers and school officers, and the stimulation of such legislative action as will consummate and perfect the widely beneficent ends you have had so steadily in view.

"Although, for convenience, the late avowal of the Trustees as to their future purpose has been termed a 'new departure,' yet from the first consultations two grand objects were determined upon. 'The urgent and pressing physical needs of an almost impoverished people' precluding them 'from making, by unaided efforts, such advances in education as were desirable, the Trustees decided the establishment of public schools and the training of public school teachers to be the wisest disposition of the Fund. Free school education and Normal Schools were the objective points, and these, looking to permanent results, have had the support of the Trustees throughout the entire history of the Trust. Instead of distributing the income of the Fund promiscuously, aid has been concentrated on a few central schools of a high order, to serve as examples and incentives, rather than on a larger number of inferior or less influential schools. During the present year help has been given to a few schools, and has been promised to a few others, in communities where insufficient State revenues have been generously supplemented by local taxation.

"The instruction of the Board to apply the greater por-

tion of the income of the Fund hereafter to the education of teachers for the public schools has met with general and decided approval.

“ . . . Special aid has been given to Teachers' Institutes, defined by some one as 'locomotive Normal Schools.' . . . Normal Schools, as having continuous life and influence, and coming more literally within the purview of the instruction of the Trustees, have had much thought and labor. Permanent arrangements are needed to train the multitudes of teachers which our school systems demand. The short-lived Institutes are not attended by all, or by the most incompetent, and cannot give thorough professional discipline and training. Not a few summer months, but toilsome years, are indispensable to teacher-training.

“The Normal College at Nashville has been regarded by the Trustees with peculiar favor, the purpose being to build up an institution of very high order, and a fit monument of the benefaction of Mr. Peabody. For years the College was sustained largely by their donations, efforts to secure direct State aid and co-operation being fruitless. The Trustees of the University of Nashville gave what aid they could with their limited means, but there was an increasing disappointment at the want of co-operation on the part of the State. You were, therefore, constrained to consider seriously the withdrawal of your donation, and the giving of help to a State which would show by adequate pecuniary aid a higher appreciation of a Normal College. It is needless to recapitulate the protracted and embarrassing negotiations which oppressed the mind and impaired the health of the late General Agent. Suffice it to say that such assurance and guaranties of permanent assistance were obtained as to convince Dr. Sears that the entire or chief burden of sustaining the College would not hereafter fall on the Peabody Fund. The question of withdrawing aid from the College was therefore cheerfully abandoned.”

The report then states the agreement which had been reached during the year, by which aid, amounting to several thousand dollars annually, was guaranteed by the State of Tennessee to the Nashville Normal College; and indicates the strong probability, which later became a reality, that more liberal appropriations would soon follow. This statement is succeeded by a more particular and detailed account of the work that was then in progress, in connection with the Fund, in each of the States of West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Tennessee, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas; and the report closes with a table, showing what portions of the total expenditure of \$50,375.00, made during the year, had been applied respectively to Teachers' Institutes, permanent schools, Nashville scholarships, and educational journals in the several States.

This first report of the new General Agent made, as was to have been expected, a very favorable impression upon the Trustees of the Fund; and is set out here, in its somewhat dry details, both as showing the conditions surrounding Curry's undertaking, and as illustrating his comprehensive and immediate grasp of the situation. After hearing it read, there could remain no doubt in the minds of the members of the Board, if such a doubt had even for a moment existed, that they had found the right man for the place.

His diary for the year, 1881, under date of October 5, contains the simple entry:—

Trustees met. All present except Waite, Chief Justice, and Mr. Russell.

Read my first Report. Much complimented.



During the succeeding official year Curry continued his work upon the lines and according to the methods theretofore pursued, and with a steady and glowing enthusiasm and an ever unabated industry. He attended the local Institutes, visited schools and colleges, made speeches at educational meetings, and availed himself of whatever opportunities offered themselves to his alert and eager intelligence of advancing his cause. He paid especial attention, too, to arousing the interest of public men and State officials in his work, and before the anniversary of his first annual report came around again, he had made addresses in behalf of State aid to education before the legislatures of West Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi and Texas.

The progress of his work, and the misconceptions of many as to its significance, may be read in an extract from his second Report, made to the Trustees October 4, 1882:—

Although the administration of the Peabody Fund has been in operation since 1867, and twenty full reports have been published and widely distributed, it affords matter for surprise that inaccurate notions are entertained as to the intention of Mr. Peabody, the amount of the Fund, and the oft-declared policy of the Trustees. Application for aid for the most diverse objects—educational, religious, charitable, personal—are constantly made. It seems almost impossible to eradicate two misapprehensions; first, that the Fund was intended as a charity for the poor; and secondly, that all schools, complying with the prescribed conditions precedent, are entitled to promote assistance. One of the most urgent pleas for help is that the community is poor. Much as this appeal may excite personal sympathy, the Fund is not eleemosynary, but has a distinct and well-defined object. As the income of the Fund is

limited, only a few schools can be aided; and the Trustees, in accordance with the wish of Mr. Peabody, by judicious selections of schools and localities, and by appropriations limited as to amount and time, have sedulously striven to aid in the establishment of a permanent system of "free schools for the whole people." The prime purpose of aiding nascent school-systems of the Southern States, so as to enable them to attain to permanency and efficiency, has been kept steadily in view. Thus to stimulate communities and States has required wisdom, patience, firmness, acquaintance with men and educational systems, large correspondence and much travel.

Another error, not so prevalent, is that the Fund is for the exclusive benefit of the white race. By carefully chosen language, both races were included in the benefaction; and the late and the present General Agent have esteemed it a patriotic and Christian privilege to carry out the wishes of the Founder of the Trust and of the Trustees, that no discrimination betwixt races should be made beyond what a wise administration required. In every State aid is given to the colored race and the General Agent has frequently besought and obtained from State Superintendents special efforts in behalf of colored schools and colored teachers.

This statement of Curry's in regard to the attitude of the Southern States towards the education of the negroes carries with it a significance, which it doubtless gave him pleasure to indicate. All of these States, by the time at which he wrote, had recovered themselves from the political and social chaos into which they had been plunged by the War and by Reconstruction; and though none of them had emerged from the poverty that had been thrust upon them by these two equally tragic episodes, they were already affording an example, unparalleled,

perhaps in the history of the world, of unselfish purpose to lift up and elevate by education a servile and untaught race, that had been so short a time before but "hewers of wood and drawers of water" among them.

"One cannot but contemplate with intense joy," he continues, "the potent agencies which are at work to place beyond contingency or peril the free-school systems. If it were not invidious, it would be pleasant to specify certain Southern newspapers, which, although chiefly political, have given column after column to accounts of Normal School and Institute exercises, and to convincing arguments in favor of free schools. Unusual as such mention may be, it would be unjust not to refer to the valuable labors of Rev. A. D. Mayo, one of the editors of the 'New England Journal of Education,' whose addresses in Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina have been stimulating and instructive, and whose ministry of education has been productive of much good."

Curry then gives an account of the "Slater Fund," about the organization and work of which President Hayes, one of its incorporators, had already been seeking his advice.

"On 2 March, 1882," he continues in his second report, "John F. Slater of Norwich, Connecticut, gave one million of dollars in trust to several gentlemen, who have been created by the State of New York a body politic and corporate by the name of 'The Trustees of the Slater Fund.' Two of the members of this Board, Ex-President Hayes and Chief Justice Waite, are among the corporators. The general object of the trust is to apply, for a term of years, the income to 'the uplifting of the lately emancipated people of the Southern States and their posterity, by conferring on them the blessings of a Christian education,' so as 'to make them good men and good citizens.' While the



prosecution of the general object is left to the discretion and largest liberty of the Trustees, Mr. Slater indicated as desirable objects 'the training of teachers from among the people requiring to be taught' and 'the encouragement of such institutions as are most effectually useful in promoting this training of teachers.'"

That the Trustees of the Slater Fund were already largely relying on Curry's judgment and experience in perfecting their organization and mapping out their work is indicated by the letters which Mr. Hayes had written him.

"I thank you," wrote the ex-President, from Fremont, Ohio, under date of April 20, 1882, "for the speech and your letter. The consolidation of educational funds has a great deal to recommend it. We have suffered vastly in Ohio by scattering among thirty or forty colleges funds which would have amply endowed three or four. But it is idle to criticise. We must make all we can out of existing facts.

"I shall want to confer with you about the line of action that is wise for the Slater Trustees to take, and would like to know of your probable movements for the next two months. If a charter is granted, as we expect, by the State of New York, our headquarters will be in the City of N. Y., and I shall go there perhaps two or three times yearly.

"I shall take occasion to correct the misapprehension as to the work of the Peabody Fund among the colored people."

And again Mr. Hayes writes to Curry on the same subject:—

FREMONT, O.,  
5 July, 1882.

MY DEAR SIR:—I send you herewith the act incorporating the Trustees of the Slater Fund, and Mr. Slater's letter defining the Trust.

At the first meeting held in New York in May, the trustees appointed a Finance Committee, an Executive Committee, consisting of the President of the Board, the Secretary, President Gilman, Gov. Colquitt, Dr. Boyce and Hon. Wm. E. Dodge; and a Committee on Rules. President Gilman is permanent Secretary. Mr. Jessup is Treasurer.

The funds were invested by the Finance Committee at about six percent interest. The rate of interest of the securities taken is six percent, but a small premium was paid.

Inasmuch as the income, only, can be expended for the purposes of the Trust, no expenditure will be made until after next December, when the first income will be available. In the meantime a General Agent will be appointed, and a policy and plans matured. The subject of a General Agent and plans are before the Executive Committee for consideration and report. The next meeting of the Board will be in October, in New York, at the time the Peabody Trustees hold their meeting.

Throughout the proceedings thus far the Peabody Trust has been the model in the mind of Mr. Slater, and of the Trustees of his appointment.

No person has been fixed upon for General Agent. I am inclined to think that a Southern man should be selected. Dr. Haygood and Mr. Orr of Georgia have been suggested. Neither is a candidate, and I do not know that either would accept. Dr. Steiner of Md. is in the same position. Can you aid us with a confidential suggestion? Indeed, after reading the trust deed, may I not hope for suggestions from you on the whole matter? One of the points which I deem important is such an administration of the trust as will strengthen the cause of Education in the South, especially for the Colored. It seems to me that one of the best things now doing by you with the Peabody Fund is the aid afforded to those who are creating a sound public sentiment on the subject of Education in the South.

I would like to preserve the particular copy of the Slater trust paper which I send you,—but keep it as long as you wish.

Sincerely,

R. B. HAYES.

HON. J. L. M. CURRY,  
RICHMOND.

Another of the “potent agencies” for education of the South, which rejoiced Curry’s heart, and of which he also makes mention in his report of October, 1882, to the Peabody Trustees, is the endowment of the “Tulane Administrators,” which resulted in the establishment of The Tulane University at New Orleans.

“Another illustration,” he writes, “of honorable munificence, more local in its benefits, is the gift of Paul Tulane, of New Jersey. To certain persons, incorporated under the name of ‘The Administrators of the Tulane Education Fund,’ Mr. Tulane, in June, 1882, executed a trust-deed, conveying certain real-estate, in the city of New Orleans, State of Louisiana, ‘for the promotion and encouragement of intellectual, moral, and industrial education among the white young persons in the city of New Orleans, and for the advancement of letters, the arts and sciences therein.

“Such benefactions, for such unselfish purposes,” comments Curry, “are honorable to our race and country, and their influence will survive with increasing strength and usefulness. Mr. Slater says: ‘I am encouraged to the execution, in this charitable foundation, of a long-cherished purpose by the eminent wisdom and success that has marked the conduct of the Peabody Education Fund in a field of operation not remote from that contemplated by this Trust.’ The letter of Mr. Tulane furnishes internal evidence, corroborated by the statement of the counsel



who drew the papers, that the gift of Mr. Peabody and the administration of the Fund afforded much assistance in shaping the terms of the trust.

“Stimulating and valuable as are these gifts, the Southern States cannot rely on individual beneficence. Education is a civil as well as a parental duty. It is of the essence of true manhood. By no other means can man make the best of himself and fulfil his obligations. It is his inalienable birthright. What is true of all men is especially true of an American citizen. General intelligence is necessary to popular liberty, to the safety and perpetuity of our representative institutions.”

In May, 1882, Curry, as their General Agent, presented on behalf of the Peabody Trustees to the United States Congress a petition, calling the attention of that body to a former memorial of the Board, which had been presented two years earlier; and renewing the solicitation contained in the memorial, that the Federal Government's aid be given in co-operation with the public school systems in the Southern States.

In October, the Trustees of the Fund held their regular annual meeting in New York, to which Curry reported satisfactory progress in the work under his charge. He had visited nearly all the Southern States, and by request had addressed the legislatures of North Carolina, Florida, Alabama, Tennessee and Arkansas, in each of which States the movement in behalf of general education had aroused the interest of its public men. He reported further at this time:—

All the State Superintendents have been cheerful in their co-operation with the General Agent, and zealous in their respective States for the Public Schools. It would

be ungrateful and unjust not to make mention of the aid often given by him to the Bureau of Education at Washington. General Eaton, beyond a technical discharge of office work, delights also to advance the general cause by his abundant information, wide experience, personal counsel, and eloquent voice.

The year has been marked by the usual assemblages of educators. The discussions are taking a wide scope, and embracing problems connected with education which show the increasing importance of the subject. . . . There is a growing recognition of the alliance betwixt industrial and mental training. . . . In some of the States a new phase of the free school question is presenting itself. Kentucky has recently stricken from her statutes an unwise discrimination betwixt the races in the disbursement of school funds; but in the flush of our rejoicings over such a triumph of patriotism and generous self-sacrifice, we find a disposition elsewhere to adopt what Kentucky, after trial, has cast aside. It is not proper in this Report to mention, much less to discuss, the causes which have created this hurtful sentiment in favor of throwing upon each race the burden of educating the children of that race. Were we to concede all that is claimed as justifying the discrimination, it might be conclusively replied that the confinement of the school revenues pro rata to the race paying the taxes is a measure that originates in narrow prejudice, or is punitive for certain alleged political offenses, and is, therefore, an unstable and unworthy ground for the legislation of Christian statesmen.

Public education at public cost has its best defence in the obligation to preserve national life.

This attitude of Curry's in favor of meting out equal and exact justice in the distribution of State funds in aid of education to both whites and blacks was one which he had assumed long before his connection with the Peabody Fund, and had publicly

announced as early as 1866, in his speech at Marion, in which he had advised the people of the South to pay of their poverty for the education of the dense mass of negro ignorance in their midst, upon which the readjustment of a revolutionized society had conferred the privileges of an unintelligent citizenship. The preservation of the national life seemed to him impossible without the education of the citizenship which goes to make up that life; and in this view there was no divergence by him from the democratic attitude on the subject of education, which was held by his political exemplar, and the founder of the school of governmental thought to which he had always maintained allegiance. Mr. Jefferson had not only been an advocate of State aid to higher education, but he had insisted that the State University, in the properly constructed educational system, should be the capstone of the common schools, supported by local taxation. For him the common school was an essential part of the free government of the individual citizen, whose functions should be:—

(1) To give to every citizen the information he needs for the transaction of his own business;

(2) To enable him to calculate for himself, and to express and preserve his ideas, his contracts and accounts in writing;

(3) To improve, by reading, his morals and faculties;

(4) To understand his duties to his neighbors and country, and to discharge with competence the functions confided to him by either;

(5) To know his rights; to exercise with order and justice those he retains; to choose with discretion the fiduciary of those he delegates; and to notice their conduct with diligence, with candor and judgment.



(6) And, in general, to observe with intelligence and faithfulness all the social relations under which he shall be placed.

The "readjustment" by one or more of the Gulf States of some of the bonds included in Mr. Peabody's donation was engaging the attention of the Trustees at this time. In 1886 the Peabody scholarships were withdrawn from those States; but in 1892 they were restored. At the meeting of the Board in October, 1883, a memorial was presented, signed by Bishop Thomas U. Dudley, Dr. W. H. Whitsett, Dr. John A. Broadus, Rabbi A. Moses, Vice-Chancellor John G. Simrall, Dr. Basil Manly, and eighteen others, prominent citizens of Kentucky, praying that their State might also be included among those receiving the benefits of the Peabody Fund. The memorial was referred to a committee consisting of Messrs. Waite, Fish and Jackson of the Trustees, who in their report embodied the following resolution:—

That this Board will cordially unite with the people of Kentucky in any effort that may be made to create an interest in favor of education by means of public schools, and the General Agent is requested, if an opportunity should be afforded him, to address the Legislature on the subject, and to do what else he can to direct attention to the importance of making ample provision for the permanent establishment and maintenance of such a system of schools in the State.

This report was accepted by the Board; and on the 25th of January following, Curry, by special invitation, appeared before the Legislature of Kentucky and delivered an address along the lines of the

Peabody Board's resolution. The Legislature soon afterwards passed a bill providing for great improvements in the public school system; but the aid to the State on the part of the Peabody Board appears to have been little more than that of a tender of moral encouragement; for it seems that no disbursements of money were ever made from the Fund to education in Kentucky.

Some of the entries in Curry's diary about this time are not without a personal interest. In December, 1883, Matthew Arnold visited Richmond, and was hospitably received by many of its prominent citizens. Curry writes in his diary under date of the 18th of that month:—

Called on Mr. Matthew Arnold. Heard him lecture at night on "Literature and Science."

And on the day following:—

With Mr. Arnold visited two colored schools.

Early in 1884 he writes:—

January 30.—Called on George Bancroft at Washington. Had a very pleasant interview.

But the journal is unfortunately silent as to the impressions which were made on him, at this time, either by the English author of "Literature and Dogma," or by the great American, whose monument is his "History of the United States."

In April, 1884, he was elected President of the Board of Trustees of the State Normal College for Women, at Farmville, Virginia, which had been recently established by the Virginia Legislature, and to the Principalship of which Dr. William H. Ruffner, whom Curry ranked as an educator with Mann,

Sears and Wickersham, was chosen at the same meeting. Curry maintained a deep interest in this institution, and continued President of its Board until October 1, 1885, when he resigned the presidency, though still remaining a Trustee until April 25, 1893.

At the ensuing October meeting of the Peabody Board, he made his usual report, which contained an interesting paragraph concerning those educational institutions in Virginia, which derived aid from the Fund:—

Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, under the administration of its accomplished president (General S. C. Armstrong) is almost an anomaly in educational work. Its success has been extraordinary. . . .

The Normal and Collegiate Institute at Petersburg,—the instructors of which are colored,—is well sustained by the State, and closed a year of good work. The Legislature authorized a State Normal School for Girls, which has been located at Farmville. Litigation embarrassed and delayed the action of the Trustees. The difficulties being removed, the school will soon be opened under the headship of Hon. W. H. Ruffner.

A Convention of County Superintendents and four Teachers' Institutes have been valuable agencies in stimulating and directing educational energies. One thousand and twenty-eight teachers attended the Institutes,—nearly double the number enrolled any single year before.

Curry's busy life in this period may be appreciated by a glimpse at the varied activities in which he was engaged,—activities which demanded the constant exercise of physical no less than of mental energies. First and foremost, he was the General Agent of the Peabody Fund, and in the discharge of that office,

he had made out of every legislative chamber in the South, a new and very vital sort of pulpit from which to preach the gospel of training for all people, high and low, black and white. He delivered addresses during the year 1884 before the legislatures of Virginia, Mississippi, Kentucky, Louisiana, and South Carolina; and he spoke before a joint committee of the Virginia Legislature in favor of a State Normal School, and to a House Committee of the United States Congress on the subject of Federal aid to State education. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of Richmond College and of that of the Farmville Woman's College, and was President of both of these boards, giving to the discharge of the duties incident to the positions he occupied on them a full measure of his time, energies and talents. His services were constantly in demand, and scarcely less constantly given to attending and addressing educational and religious conventions and assemblies; and he filled in the spare moments of a life, busy to overflowing, with commencement speeches at schools, colleges and Universities. The man's vitality of mind and body seems almost super-normal in the light of his unremitting work. He served on the Board of Directors of the Richmond Woollen Mills; he taught a Sunday-school class with the undimmed and undiminished enthusiasm of his earlier religious work; he took part in pastors' conferences; he married couples; he preached funeral sermons; he participated in the work of committees on foreign missions, and for aiding the advancement of religion and education among the negroes of the Southern States. In fine, he was preacher, teacher, man of affairs, politician, lecturer, educator and philan-



thropist at once; and in all the relations of these varied pursuits, he left a vivid impress of his personality upon whatever he touched. Of the demands made upon his physical energies some idea may be formed from the statement that, in his widely distributed work during the year 1884, he travelled altogether a distance of more than seventeen thousand miles.

A few days after the meeting of the Peabody Trustees in October, 1884, he went to Georgia, where on the 8th of the month he attended the Centennial meeting of the Georgia Baptist Association at the town of Washington in that State. During his visit to Washington he was a guest at the hospitable home of General Robert Toombs, who had been a conspicuous figure in the ante-bellum discussions of slavery, state rights and strict construction; and after serving as Secretary of State for the Confederacy, and as a general in the army of Northern Virginia, had sought England as a place of refuge succeeding Appomattox. He had come back to his native land after a brief period of exile; but even at the time of Curry's visit he was still "irreconcilable" in his refusal to take the oath of allegiance to the Federal government.

In Curry's diary of the time of this visit to Georgia, we find the brief exhibition of a reminiscent and tender mood:—

Saturday, October 11.—Left for Lincoln County in a buggy. Night at Jesse Cartledge's, where I was born.

Sunday, October 12.—Talked to Sunday school, and preached at Double Branches, where I heard my first sermon.

In early January of the following year he was in Washington, D. C., working for the passage of the Blair bill by the Federal Congress. In the latter days of March he was again in Washington:—

March 27.—To Washington and back.

Saw Secretaries Lamar and Garland, Assistant Secretary Porter, and Gen. Eaton and Atkins. Lamar asked if I would accept place of head of Bureau of Education, and I replied in the negative.

Early in May he was the recipient of a letter from President Hayes inviting him to confer with the Slater Board.

In response to this invitation he went to New York; and his diary under date of May 20, 1885, contains the following:—

Attended by invitation the annual meeting of the Trustees of the Slater Fund, to confer as to the policy of the Board.

Talked an hour or more, giving my opinion, and answering questions.

Dined at the University Club. Present, M. K. Jesup, host; President Hayes; Chief Justice M. R. Waite; D. C. Gilman, President of Johns Hopkins; J. A. Stewart; W. E. Dodge; Dr. A. G. Haygood; Hon. G. J. Orr of Georgia.

"In the autumn of 1885," he writes, "I was in Southwest Virginia and East Tennessee, attending associations and making speeches in behalf of Education, Missions, &c. During my absence Mrs. Curry received a letter from Hon. Thos. F. Bayard, addressed to me, offering in behalf of President Cleveland the position of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Spain. For some days neither letter nor telegram could reach me. Finally at Rogersville, Tennessee, the unexpected news reached me, and I took the first train for Asheville to join Mrs.

Curry and discuss the question of acceptance. After two visits to Washington, I saw Mr. Bayard and the President and accepted the position; but concluded to have no publication thereof until after the meeting of the Peabody Trustees, which was to occur soon in October."

On October 1, 1885, Curry resigned his position as President of the Board of Trustees of the Woman's Normal College at Farmville, retaining, however, his office of Trustee until April 25, 1893. Six days later he submitted his annual report to the Peabody Board, at their regular meeting in New York City. After reading the report, he presented to the Board the following communication:—

RICHMOND, VA., Oct. 7, 1885.

*To the Trustees of the Peabody Education Fund:*

Having consented to accept from the Government an important diplomatic trust, I must ask you not to renew my appointment as General Agent, unless it be for a very brief period, so as to prevent any confusion from a too sudden severance of the connection which I hold with the Fund.

In closing a relation, which to me has been uninterruptedly pleasant, you will pardon me for expressing my most grateful appreciation of the confidence and of the personal regard with which you have honored me. From the honored Chairman and every Trustee, I have had only kindness and generous support. The performance of my duties, not easy as I interpreted them, has been a labor of love. Mr. Peabody was the most liberal benefactor the South ever had, and his benefaction came at a time when she was in the depth of poverty and anguish. Education being necessary to material advancement, and in every mental and moral relation, his munificence took most wisely the direction of aiding in the education of the youth of both races. The initial effort of the Trustees was to stim-

ulate the establishment of public school systems, and afterwards to insure their permanency and constant improvement. As a factor in the production of these accomplished results, no single agency has been so potent and beneficial as the Peabody Education Fund. The next and correlated step was to labor for the improvement of the teaching in the public schools. This has been effected in a marked degree by sustaining Teachers' Institutes and Normal Schools. The States are gradually incorporating into their school systems, and sustaining by annual grants, these most effective instrumentalities for the improvement of those systems. The Normal College at Nashville has emerged from the difficulties which five years ago imperilled its life, and now, with the cordial co-operation of Tennessee, is vindicating its right to a place among the best institutions of its kind in the United States.

Instead of confining myself to office work,—to the humble but useful avocation of almoner for the distribution of the income of the Fund,—I have sought to do something towards the creation of a healthier educational sentiment, and to identify the Trust with the most advanced educational progress. Every door of access to the people,—to schools, colleges, legislatures,—has been thrown wide open to your representative, and if good has not been done, the fault is his. Everywhere I have advocated the uplifting of the lately emancipated and enfranchised negro, and upon no part of my work do I look back with greater personal satisfaction.

In the spirit of the Trust, and in known harmony with the opinions of Mr. Peabody, I have labored assiduously to renew and cultivate a feeling of broad and catholic patriotism, to cement in closest fraternity all sections and peoples of the Union, to bury discords and strifes, and to lift up to a higher plane than that of sectional animosity or of angry prejudices. To-day, thank God, the South is as loyal to the Union, and as ready to pour out blood and



treasure for the national honor and national safety as Ohio or Massachusetts.

What has been achieved in the States which are the beneficiaries of the Trust, since you organized as a Board in Washington City, on the 8th of February, 1867, is incredible. There have been revolutions in labor, economic industries, customs, traditions, feelings, convictions, laws and institutions, any one of which considered singly would mark a social era, a civil epoch. No people ever accomplished so much for education, in so brief a period, under such crushing embarrassments, as the South has done. If the General Government, heeding the earnest words and the unanswerable arguments of this Board, will come to the relief of States struggling with heroic energy to meet the responsibilities of their new life, problems of gigantic import will be aided in their solution, and the faith and the hope of the patriot and the Christian will be strengthened in reference to the success and the perpetuity of the Republic.

The policy of your Board is so well established, and the method of administration has been so simplified, that my withdrawal will put you to no inconvenience.

Thanking you for your numerous kindnesses, and wishing great success to the work of the Fund, I am,

Yours most respectfully,

J. L. M. CURRY.

On motion of Mr. Evarts, this communication of Curry's, which sets forth in perspicuous summary the purposes and achievements of the Peabody Trustees on the one hand, and the methods, aims and aspirations that had animated himself on the other, was referred to the Executive Committee of the Board for consideration. Mr. Winthrop, for the Executive Committee, on the next day submitted

the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted by the Board:—

Resolved, That the Trustees of the Peabody Education Fund have received with sincere regret the announcement of Dr. Curry, that, having accepted the appointment of United States Minister to Madrid, he must decline a re-election as the General Agent of this Trust; that the Trustees desire to enter on their records the deep sense which they entertain of the fidelity and devotion with which he has discharged his duties for more than four years past, and of the great success which has attended his labors;—and that the grateful regards of the Trustees will follow him into his new sphere of public service, with their best wishes for his health and happiness.

Resolved, That the appointment of a General Agent be postponed for consideration until the next meeting of the Board, with authority to the Executive Committee, in the meantime, to make such temporary arrangements for the conduct of the General Agency as they may find necessary.

Curry was requested to continue to act as General Agent until his departure for Spain; and Dr. S. A. Green, the Secretary of the Board, was requested and authorized to serve temporarily as General Agent in Curry's absence.

It is interesting to note that at this meeting President Cleveland and Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan were elected to membership on the Board of Trustees. Mr. Morgan was chosen Treasurer and held that office uninterruptedly thereafter. For four years Curry had been engaged in the most fruitful work offered to any man in Southern life. The paralysis of war had at last passed away and hope everywhere reigned. He had a country which he "could love" and which he was about to represent in a foreign

land. This service, distinguished and agreeable as it was, must be considered as a mere interlude in the man's essential career. The Peabody Trustees perceived this and kept his work waiting for him. The great preacher had found his ultimate pulpit in the schoolhouses and legislative chambers of eleven States awakening to a new national life. His general theme was an efficient citizenship in a reunited republic. He perceived the real menace of the ignorant negro. He saw the necessity of industrial preparation. He felt the need on the white man's part of the philosophic view and the sense of obligation. He had faith in the justice and good sense of the people, and he knew their sturdy power. His appeal was to the heart and his method the method of the orator. Looked at in the clear light of another generation, the group of men who preceded and were now gathered about Curry, as he began his notable work, was worthy of such a period in our educational history. Samuel Chapman Armstrong, a young man of original genius and consecration, schooled under Mark Hopkins, was beginning, on the shores of Hampton Roads, a revolutionary movement for negro education destined to pour into that misguided work a stream of common sense and high purpose which has served to steady and direct it until this day. He saw that the first necessity was a military government of these negro youth, practically and morally let loose into infinite space. Then must follow a training, all the way up, in work, the boys or girls being expected to furnish to a considerable extent the means for their schooling and support. The schooling must be co-educational, that the educated colored boy could

have for his wife an educated colored girl. The religious education should be Christian in the broad sense that it left the worship of creed and ecclesiastical polity out of account. As soon as possible the school at Hampton was set free from dependence on any association and organized under a board of directors. He also understood that any system of schooling of the colored people, to be effective and permanent, while it might depend largely on the North for pecuniary support, must commend itself to the common school public of the Southern State in which it was set up. Thus he persuaded the Legislature of Virginia to appropriate \$10,000 annually of its national industrial school fund, with the superintendent of public instruction and other gentlemen of the State as advisory trustees. He left the classical upper story out of his system of instruction, organizing the school as far as possible according to the methods of the best primary and secondary graded schools of the day. The normal training of the superior students was at once established, under competent management, in connection with the practice department, the Butler common school, afterwards named the Whittier.

William H. Ruffner, a young Presbyterian clergyman and scientist, as first State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Virginia, was planting the American Common School upon a philosophic basis, from which it could never be dislodged in the statutes and affections of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Men like John Eaton, Edward S. Joynes, William Preston Johnston, Calvin H. Wiley, Atticus G. Haygood, were striking hands with Armstrong, Sears and others of their kind in Northern life and develop-



ing a cause and a quality of leadership to which the best of the younger generation could repair. The home of the late President of the Southern Confederacy had been reconstructed into a public school-house, and as a background of infinite dignity and inspiration to the whole idea had stood the example of Lee quietly at work, reorganizing the old Washington College into the institution which should also bear his honored name.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE LAND OF THE ALHAMBRA

CURRY's invitation to represent the United States Government at Madrid came in a flattering way, and all the circumstances of his designation to one of the foremost offices in the foreign service were well calculated to arouse the recipient's interest and to kindle his enthusiasm.

Mr. Bayard, the Secretary of State, wrote to him as follows:—

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
WASHINGTON, Sept. 7, 1885.

*Personal and Confidential.*

MY DEAR SIR:—I wish to enlist you in the public service, and believe that an opportunity for high usefulness is open to you, in which it may be in your power to render important service to our country.

The mission to Spain is now vacant, and I consider that point in our foreign relations as second in importance to none.

Nothing could exhibit to you my personal trust and confidence in your character and capacity more than this expression of my wish to see you the representative of the United States at Madrid. If you wish to consult with me before accepting the trust, let me hear from you,—and see you here.

I can give you a room in my house (1413 Massachusetts Avenue), where we can have free conference.

Sincerely yours,

T. F. BAYARD.

Upon learning of the tender of the Spanish Mission, Curry's mind turned at once to his friend, Mr. Winthrop. From the little town in East Tennessee, where the news reached him, he wrote at once to the venerable President of the Peabody Board.

ROGERSVILLE, TENN.,

*Confidential.*

14 Sept., '85.

DEAR MR. WINTHROP:—

For nearly a week I have been near "Cumberland Gap," remote from railways and telegraph. Arriving here a few minutes ago, I find a letter and a mailed telegram from Mrs. Curry, startling me with the announcement that President Cleveland tenders me the Mission to Spain. The tender was suggested, of course, by no solicitation of mine. It is a surprise. In my confusion, I turn to you as my most valued and trusted friend. What shall I do? I rather suspect Mrs. Curry would not be unwilling to spend a year or two abroad. My Peabody work out of the way, I should not be unwilling to go to Italy or Austria; but I love the Peabody work; I am under obligation to the Trustees; and I value, as the most prized and pleasant of all earth's gifts, wife and children excepted, your friendship and my labor with you. Pardon me for the utterance, but I love you as I have never loved any man outside my father's family; and I can consent to do nothing to which you object. Help me in the dilemma. I know nothing beyond what I have written, save that I am summoned to Washington. I shall reach Asheville to-morrow, and may leave for Washington on the 16th.

Ever yours sincerely,

J. L. M. CURRY.

HON. ROBT. C. WINTHROP,  
BROOKLINE, MASS.

The effect of this letter of Curry's upon Mr. Winthrop may be best shown by the latter's reply,

*Univ Calif - Digitized by Microsoft®*

evidently written upon the day of its receipt, and illustrated with a scriptural text of which the communication itself is an exposition.

*For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me (Job 3:25).*

BROOKLINE, MASS'TTS.,  
16 Sept., 1885.

MY DEAR DR. CURRY:—

Your "confidential" letter of the 14th inst., from Rogersville, Tenn., has just reached me, and has filled me with consternation. I had written to you at Asheville yesterday, after examining the proofs of your Report, and my soul was at ease. I looked forward to our approaching meeting at New York with confidence, and felt that our Peabody work was secure for a long future. I felt, too, that take it all in all, it was the greatest work of our time and land, and that the names of good Dr. Sears and yourself would go down to posterity embalmed by the memory of the highest services to the South and the whole country.

The idea of losing you from our labors came strongly upon me, when the new Administration first came in. And if our friend Bayard had at once offered you a first-class mission, I should at least have acquiesced in its being deservedly assigned. The text which I have written at the top of this letter was then often in my mind. But as one after another of the foreign appointments was filled by men inferior to yourself, and as your own assurances of unfailing devotion to our work were renewed to me by letter and by lip, I had abandoned all apprehensions, and had looked forward to being lovingly associated with you in the cause of Southern Education for the little remnant of my own life.

I do not wonder that Bayard has been tempted to pluck you from our hand. But for him to propose to plump you and dear Mrs. Curry down into the midst of a raging cholera at Madrid, is certainly of doubtful kindness.



Were there a great exigency there, you would not shrink from such a service at any risk, I well know. But is there anything to be done at Madrid, which can be compared in importance to the work you are now doing so admirably and so effectively at home? Will any honor ever attach to your name, by a service at Madrid, in any degree comparable to that which you have won and are winning in your present sphere?

But all this is aside from the real issue, to which I hasten to turn. It is in no spirit of flattery or compliment that I say, that you are the very pivot of George Peabody's great Southern benefaction. All its success turns upon you. To take you from your post at this moment, would be like taking the pilot of the "Puritan" away, when she was just on the starting line. The American cup would go to the "Genesta." Seriously, I am afraid your withdrawal from our work, so suddenly and at such short notice, would not only embarrass and perplex us terribly, but would awaken feelings in our Board which would afflict me.

Were such a separation six months off,—so that there would be time for deliberation,—sad as the prospect would be to me, it would be less appalling. When good Dr. Sears died, I was able, with the aid of his daughter, to carry our work along for many months. But I am older and feebler now, and should not know where to turn. Our Board, too, is in a crippled condition,—three vacancies to be filled next month, and several of those who are left suffering from old age and infirmities.

I write frankly, as you would have me, and from the fullness of my heart. But I should do injustice to the vital importance of your services as our General Agent, if I did not say that your withdrawal would be an irreparable loss. Should that loss really befall us, and your place be supplied by some pressing Northern candidate, the South would be disquieted. But your place could not be filled in the estimation of either South or North.

I fully appreciate your wife's natural disposition to

spend a few years abroad as an Ambassadress. I am afraid I shall be out of her good graces, which would be a great grief to me, by writing as I have. But better things than Madrid may turn up for both of you one of these days. She would not like to have it said hereafter that the cause of Southern Education had been brought to a stand, and the Peabody Fund plunged into confusion, by her husband's acceptance of a Mission abroad.

Forgive my strong expressions. I write off-hand, and take no copy of my letter. Let me thank you, however, as I do sincerely, for your warm and affectionate personal expressions, which I heartily reciprocate. One of my main obligations to George Peabody is that his Trust brought me into such intimate relations with Dr. Sears and yourself. And let me not conclude without assuring you, that however you may decide this question, my own regard and affection for you and Mrs. Curry cannot be changed.

Ever sincerely,

Your friend,

ROBT. C. WINTHROP.

HON. J. L. M. CURRY, LL.D.

On the 23rd of September, Curry wrote to Mr. Winthrop:—

After a most painful conflict between dual duties, the decision has been made and the Government has been notified that the mission will be accepted. If I had been required to go abroad at once, a sense of obligation to the Peabody Fund would have precluded any consideration of the tender made, however honorable. Time is allowed for the selection of a successor, and to enable me by correspondence, or personal interviews, to acquaint him with our principles and methods of administration, and the *personnel* with whom the Fund must co-operate.

And Mr. Winthrop, while Curry was penning the letter containing this announcement, had already

overcome his first feelings of disappointment, and under the same date was writing to him thus:—

While I cannot abate a jot or tittle of what I have heretofore said about your importance to our Trust, I feel less anxious than I did at first about our ability to carry along the Peabody work after a fashion, without serious injury to the cause, or any great strain upon myself.

After the adjournment of the Peabody Board in New York on October 6, 1883, Curry proceeded at once to Boston, to call on Mr. Lowell, who had been appointed to Madrid by President Hayes, in 1877, and transferred thence to the court of St. James in 1880.

I visited Hon. James Russell Lowell in Boston," he writes, "and lunched with him. He was courteous and kind . . . and gave me valuable suggestions, the result of his own diplomatic experience in Madrid. One remark he made surprised me. He said he had much difficulty in convincing government and the best people that an American Minister could be a gentleman.

A few years later in response to a request for his portrait Mr. Lowell writes in this strain to his successor:

DEERFOOT FARM, SOUTHBOROUGH,  
11th Jan., 1887.

DEAR SIR:

Immediately after receiving your very kind letter of the 24th Nov., I gave directions that an engraved portrait of me should be sent to you through the Department of State. I hope that it will already have reached you. It is thought to be a pretty fair likeness.

I am very glad you liked my address at the Harvard Centenary. It was a very pleasant affair and everything

went off smoothly and successfully. The audience, especially that part of it on the platform, was a very remarkable one, the preponderance of gray and even white heads being remarkable. It was observed that nearly all those who had an active share in the ceremonies were much older than those who performed similar functions at the last celebration in 1836. The chief marshal of the day had been one of the marshals fifty years before, the poet was a graduate of fifty-seven years' standing, the orator of forty-eight, the President of the day of forty-eight, and so on. Is this a sign that we begin later than we used? At any rate it is encouraging for us veterans.

Matters are going on very quietly here. The Administration of President Cleveland is establishing itself in the confidence of the people and I think you may look forward to eight years' service at your post. I hope you find it agreeable. I was entirely contented there. I liked the Spaniards and continue to like them. I am sorry that I cannot ask to be remembered to Mrs. Curry, but I beg that you give my best respects to her.

Faithfully yours,

J. R. LOWELL.

Later in the month Curry went again to Washington.

"On 13th October," he continues, "I took the oath of office and received my commission, and then spent some days in the Department, reviewing correspondence, and familiarizing myself with duties and pending questions. I dined with Mr. Bayard and the Spanish Minister, Señor Valera and Mr. Foster, our late Minister to Spain, who was very kind and useful to me. Governor Porter and Mr. Adee, Assistant Secretaries of State, were guests also. Numerous congratulatory telegrams and letters were received, and the citizens of Richmond offered me a banquet."



Among these telegrams and letters was one so out of the usual character of such messages, that it will bear insertion here.

*The Rock Islander,*

First Established in 1854.

J. B. DANFORTH, Editor.

ROCK ISLAND, ILLS., Oct. 8, 1885.

DEAR SIR:—

To-day, when I saw in telegrams your appointment as Minister to Spain, I remembered a letter you wrote me in January, 1860; and I took it from a file of valuables, and re-read it. I was then trying to persuade you and C. C. Clay and Gov. McRea, and I don't know how many more, not to talk about secession, for it would beat us in the fall of that year. I always admired your spirited letter. I have used it several times in speeches, to show that the South was in earnest, and that secession and war were inevitable. I never published it, and don't propose to now, for it would make Rome howl.

I am very glad to hear of you again. I was afraid you had passed from earth. I congratulate you on the appointment, for I know you will creditably represent the whole country. May you live long and prosper.

Very truly yours,

J. B. DANFORTH.

HON. J. L. M. CURRY,

RICHMOND, VA.

On November 5, 1885, after a series of social entertainments given in his honor by gentlemen of distinction and prominence in Washington and in Richmond, Curry set sail from New York, accompanied by Mrs. Curry, on the steamer "Germanic." They stopped successively in London and Paris, long enough to be entertained by the American Ministers, Messrs. Phelps and McLane; and in the

latter city, Mrs. Curry tarried for a month; while her husband went on to Spain, and reached Madrid on the morning of the 25th of November.

The coming of the new American Minister to the scene of his latest labors was contemporaneous with the departure from earth of the Spanish King. On the morning of Curry's arrival, he was met at the railroad station by Mr. Strobel, the American Secretary of Legation, and escorted to his hotel. At 9 o'clock of the same day, his Majesty King Alfonso the Third departed this life; and with the note of this melancholy incident, Curry records in his diary the coincidence of the death that day of Thomas A. Hendricks, Vice-president of the United States.

On December 1st the new Minister had an unofficial interview with Sigismund Moret, the Spanish Minister of State, at his office in the palace. It appears that the death of the King invalidated Curry's credentials as Minister; and accordingly he was compelled to wait until others could be sent from Washington, before he might be formally presented to the Queen Regent. On the 3rd day of the month, however, he received a cablegram from his government at home, constituting him a special envoy to represent the United States at the King's funeral.

Although in his usual personal attire Curry always exhibited a marked neatness, and a due regard for the mandates of fashion in the cut and texture of his garments, he was in no sense an exquisite, or inclined to any sort of personal display. Yet some sense of incongruity seems to have taken possession of him, as it has been known to possess other Ameri-

can representatives in European Courts upon State occasions, in being compelled to appear at any hour of the day in clothes, which ordinarily are worn in good society the world over only in the evening. In a letter written to Mr. Winthrop on December 6, he remarks, at some length, upon his embarrassment at the "conspicuous peculiarity" of having to appear in "a dress-coat" at the King's approaching funeral, when all other diplomats of similar rank with his own would be arrayed in appropriate and imposing costumes, with their insignia and decorations.

Mr. Winthrop's reply is amusing:—

I am afraid I could not have helped you much in regard to your Court costume. I was presented to Queen Victoria in 1847, in full diplomatic uniform, while Bancroft was Minister and Polk President. In 1860 I went to Court again with Mr. Dallas, in black evening dress, but with breeches or shorts, and with a civil sword and chapeau. In 1867 I went again in my old diplomatic uniform, with Mr. Adams, who insisted on wearing a uniform like that of his father and grandfather. I suppose you have some instructions on the subject. It is rather a pity that the Ministers of the United States should be compelled to dress like the waiters.

Curry has recorded at some length the details of his first reception by the Queen Regent, which took place on the 11th of December; and of the King's funeral on the day following:—

"On that day" (December 11) "at 3.30 P. M., Mr. Strobel and I repaired to the palace, and I was presented by Señor Moret, in order to convey to the Queen the sentiments of the President in reference to the death of the King, and as preparatory to taking part in the funeral ceremonies.

"This was my first interview with Royalty, except a presentation at the Quirinal in 1876, when we had the honor at a State ball of being presented to Humbert and Christina, who afterwards became King and Queen of Italy.

"The Queen, in deep mourning, was dignified and courteous and graceful, and was evidently affected by the expressions of the little address which I made to her in behalf of my country.

"On the succeeding day occurred at the Church of St. Sebastian, with great pomp and display, the funeral of the deceased King. The house was packed. Seats were assigned to, and reserved for the diplomatic corps and the dignitaries. All the governments of Europe had authorized Special Ambassadors, who, with the Cabinet and some others, had seats of honor in the choir. Being a Special Envoy, equivalent to an Ambassador, I was honored with a seat behind the 'elect few'; and being just behind the Papal Nuncio, Cardinal Rampolla, I watched him, and was thus able to go through the various 'risings and sittings,' which were frequent, and without such experienced guidance, would have been embarrassing. The Diplomatic Corps, sat below the choir, as did various other officials and especially invited guests. All were in their gorgeous uniforms and decorations except the representatives of the United States; and we, restrained by the absurd instructions of our Government, wore the dress-suit of a head-waiter in a hotel. The Archbishop of Valladolid, Exc'mo Sr. D. Benito Sanz y Fores, preached the funeral oration; and the magnificent tenor singer, Guyarez, sang at length, and with a profound impression.

"On the same day, as diplomatic etiquette required, I had an audience, arrangements as to time having previously been made, of Infanta Isabel, sister of Alfonso, and of Isabella, the Queen Mother, who had been dethroned in 1868."



The question of a proper court costume appears to have been for a long time before Curry's mission a more or less burning one with American Ministers abroad. When Mr. Buchanan went as Minister to St. James, Secretary of State Marcy had just issued an order that American Ministers abroad should appear at public functions in the plain and simple costume of an American citizen. The effect of this order on some of the European Courts is said to have been remarkable. The British press appears to have discussed it; and the story is told that, just before the meeting of Parliament, Mr. Buchanan received from the master of ceremonies a printed paper to the effect that no one would be admitted to the diplomatic gallery or to the body of either house who did not wear a court costume. The American Minister thereupon stayed away, although the London *Times* reported him as attending and feeling uncomfortable and conspicuous in his plain clothes. When it became necessary for him to appear at Court, however, he followed his government's instructions, adding to his "evening clothes" a plain black-hilted sword; and it is related of him that Mr. Buchanan said afterwards that he never was prouder of his country than he was as he stood there, the most simply dressed person in the room, amid the uniforms and decorations of all the Courts of Europe.

On the 22nd of December, Curry presented his credential letter to Her Majesty, and was received as the Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary of the United States. On the occasion of its presentation he delivered to the Queen a formal address, which had been prepared in advance and submitted, according to custom, to the Spanish Minister